

VZCZCXRO1100
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHAM #2988 3070938
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 020938Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3760
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002988

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: JORDANIAN CIVIL SOCIETY SCRAMBLES TO PRIORITIZE
ASSOCIATIONS LAW SUGGESTIONS

REF: A. AMMAN 2716
[1](#)B. AMMAN 2977
[1](#)C. AMMAN 2701

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Minister of Social Development Hala Lattouf met with civil society leaders on October 29, returning their suggested amendments to the Law on Associations and asking once again for a prioritized list (Refs A and B). NGO leaders were given until November 2 to resubmit their changes to Lattouf's office. Ruffled by the abrupt nature of the request and the short response time, civil society leaders told us they pushed back, telling Lattouf that they expected the government to implement all of their suggestions. They were talked down by Lattouf, who held firm to the government's timeline and demands.

[1](#)2. (C) Lawyer and USAID contractor Sa'ed Karajah was tasked by the group with arranging the list and suggesting a plan of action. He told USAID staff on October 30 that the initial eight suggestions (summarized in Ref C) were being whittled down to five - registration, penalties, funding, oversight, and corporate governance. The priority order of these suggestions is still under negotiation. Note: The GOJ has only requested a prioritized list - the paring down of the amendments was at civil society's initiative. End Note.

[1](#)3. (C) Civil society reaction to the meeting with Lattouf was mixed. Asem Rababa, head of the Adaleh Center for Human Rights, told us that the government was "playing a game" for the benefit of the international community and was not ultimately serious about amending the law. Eva Abu Hawaleh of the Mizan Law Group for Human Rights was more optimistic about the chances for meaningful reform, stating that the USG is playing a necessary role behind the scenes in supporting civil society's efforts.

[1](#)4. (C) Belgian DCM Jeroen Vergeylen told Poloff October 29 that the Associations Law is now a top priority for EU diplomats in Amman. Members of the European Commission will participate in a ministerial level dialogue on aid to Jordan in early November. As part of the preparations for that meeting, Vergeylen said that EU embassies in Amman are negotiating the language of a memo that will chastise the GOJ for the Law on Associations and demand movement on the amendment process. Vergeylen promised to send Embassy Amman a copy when the text is finalized and agreed that coordinated effort on the part of all diplomatic missions was needed so the amendment process remains a priority for the Dahabi government.
Beecroft